



TOWN OF BEDFORD
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bedfordps.org

Superintendent Update

If you need this document translated, please call your child's school principal - Si necesita este documento traducido, por favor comuníquese con la escuela de su hijo - Se você precisa este documento traduzido, entre em contato com a escola do seu filho - Si vous avez besoin de traduire ce document, s'il vous plaît contacter l'école de votre enfant - 如果你需要这份文件翻译，请联系您的孩子的学校 - إذا كنت تحتاج/تحتاجين إلى ترجمة هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية يرجى الاتصال بمدرسة طفلك/طفلتك

Friday, August 21, 2020

Hello Bedford School Community,

Thank you for your continued patience as we work to reopen school. I wanted to let you know that our Cooperative Teams are working on detailed plans for each school to reopen safely under the hybrid model we proposed and was accepted at the August 5, 2020 Bedford School Committee meeting. The Cooperative Teams are doing an incredible job working out all of the details with the health and safety of all students, faculty, and staff in mind, provides academic engagement for all, supports students' social and emotional well-being, maintains equity as a core belief, creates welcoming learning environments, and enables students and teachers to build strong relationships.

Cohort Information

For planning purposes, we want to let you know that we have created our cohorts:

Cohort A will be students A through K* and these students will attend school in person on Monday and Thursday

Cohort B will be students L through Z* and these students will attend school in person on Tuesday and Friday

** Please know that the splits were not exactly even in all grades or for all courses and that principals may be contacting a limited number of families asking if they would be willing to switch cohorts. If you need a cohort switch, please contact your child's principal but please be aware that at this time switching will only be done to balance cohorts*

DESE Guidance on Athletics

This week saw more guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This week we received information that relates to the fall athletic season. I have included a chart from the Fall guidelines as a quick reference. Our athletic Director Keith Mangan is actively working to provide families with more information.

Season	Dates	Sports
Fall	Starting Sept. 18	Golf, XC running, field hockey, soccer, gymnastics, girls volleyball, fall swimming/diving, football practice,* cheer practice,* unified basketball practice* *Practice only using EEA cohort modifications : Football, cheer, unified basketball

DESE Guidance on Public Health

Another piece of guidance was a joint memo from the Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Public Health which clarified language between the two departments. This included

- The definition of close contact,
- When a close contact may return to school,
- A policy on when a person may return to school after COVID-19 symptoms,
- A definition of COVID-19 fever, clarification on student mask wearing,
- Physical distancing guidelines,
- That immunizations are required for students regardless of the model of learning,
- Clarity on medical waiting rooms,
- Supporting the safe application of hand sanitizer

Additionally, the Department of Public Health released a new requirement for flu vaccination for all K-12 students in Massachusetts. These guidelines are new to all of us and we will be discussing them with the Board of Health to clarify what they mean for us in Bedford.

DESE Technology Grant Information

Finally, we received word from DESE that the Bedford Public Schools was awarded \$122,027 dollars through the Remote Learning Technology Essentials Grant. We have already begun to use these funds for technology to aid students and teachers access the curriculum in our hybrid and remote models. We are grateful for this additional funding.

New School Committee Policies

At our next school committee meeting I will be recommending to the Bedford School Committee an official policy on face coverings. The policy will require face coverings for all individuals in school buildings. Very limited exemptions for health/medical issues will apply to this policy.

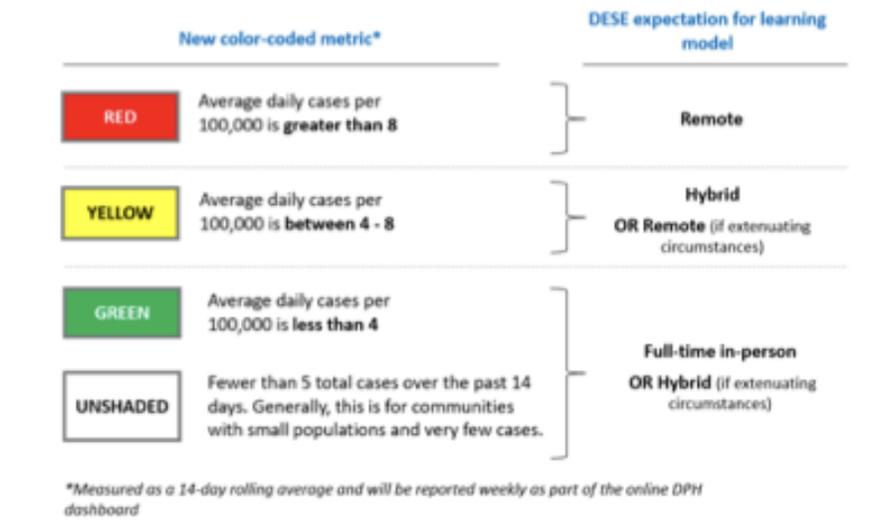
ASPEN Survey Information

At some point soon we will also be asking families to finalize their plans for the reopening of school as well. More to come on that later. At this point our parent survey indicated that 80% of families want their students to be in school in the hybrid model and that 34% of those students will be riding the bus to school.

Massachusetts and Bedford COVID-19 Information

Please keep in mind that we are now using Governor Baker's enhanced community data map which tracks COVID-19 cases and gives a colored rating from clear through red. This information is also being utilized by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to alert school communities about the risk in their particular city or town. Here in Bedford we are fortunate to receive weekly updates from

Town Manager Sarah Stanton. This week's update can be found at [Bedford August 17, 2020 COVID Information](#)



Rotary Club of Bedford

Thank you to the Rotary Club of Bedford for their recent donation of face masks for the Bedford Public Schools. Director of Facilities Taissir Alani and I were especially thrilled to meet Sze-Wen Kuo, President of the Rotary Club of Bedford, Paula Gilarde, President Nominee, and Victor Tom, Rotary District Governor Nominee.



Bedford Embraces Diversity and the Parent Diversity Council

I was thrilled to meet virtually with the Leadership of the Bedford Embraces Diversity and the Parent Diversity Council to discuss our shared goals for the year. I am excited to be able to jump in where Jon Sills, the BPS Equity and Diversity Committee and others have brought the community. I have much to learn and feel like I am in good hands. I was excited to be able to participate in the E&D Committee's book group discussion on Wednesday evening. We read the book *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. This is an excellent and easy to read book. I would highly recommend it for anyone from middle school through retirement.

Representative Ken Gordon

This week also gave me an opportunity to meet virtually with State Representative Ken Gordon. It was wonderful to meet Ken and to hear about his experience in the legislature and the value he places on helping the citizens of Bedford, the Bedford Public Schools, and the continued health of our relationship with our families in Boston and on the Hanscom Airforce base. I look forward to working closely with Ken as the legislature finalizes this year's budget and looks towards future budgets.

Start of the School Year

Just a reminder that the school year will begin for educators on August 31, 2020 and that students will begin the year with a remote learning day on Wednesday, September 16, 2020, Cohort A will have their first day of in-person instruction on Thursday, September 17, 2020, and Cohort B will have their first day of in-person instruction on Friday, September 18, 2020

Next Steps

As the Cooperative Teams get closer to working out the details of each school's reopening plan there are still a number of steps to go through in order to open school. We will need to reconcile any changes that may impact the contract between the BEA and BPS. This is an important next step in our process. I have enjoyed working closely with the BEA this summer and expect we will continue our cooperative efforts to reopen school.

Finally, I am not sure I can believe it but it has been less than eight weeks that we have been together! What a ride! I am in awe of all that we have accomplished to date. We have plans, we are working on all of the myriad of details to make sure the plans are comprehensive, and workable. This would not have been possible without the hard work of so many students, teachers, parents, staff, and administrators in the schools and in the community. We are also fortunate to work with so many wonderful business partners including Bedford Charter. There are still a number of hurdles still to clear but I am confident that together we can accomplish the task for the benefit of all of our students.

Thank you for your patience, your participation, and your continued commitment to our schools.

Wishing you continued health,

Sincerely,
Philip Conrad
Superintendent

DESE Covid-19 Website <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>